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THE FAMILY SCAPEGRACE.

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PREFATORY.

I SUPPOSE there has scarcely ever been any large household, at any period of the world's history, so fortunate as not to possess one *mauvais sujet*—one Disgrace to the Family: there have been households, such as Jacob's of old, wherein there have been ten Disgraces to two Credits, but that was an exceptional case. I speak within bounds, therefore, when I make use of the words of Mr Wadsworth Longfellow—

There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one *Black Sheep* is there;
There is no fireside, howe'er defended,
But hath one vacant chair,

about whose should-be occupant there is a silence in the domestic circle, and only an unpleasant whisper elsewhere. Like many other whispers, however, this circulates much more universally than any outspoken report. The name which we become most familiar with when we have made the acquaintance of his brethren—and often enough before we have made it—is poor Dick's. The Disgrace to the Family is generally a Dick. Godfathers and godmothers in one's baptism should look to this. Tom, too, is rather a dangerous sort of name to give a lad; but Alexander is safe enough; and as for James—I never even so much as heard of a James going wrong, except in the Stuart family. Nobody ever calls Dick, Richard—that is, 'not since it happened, you know'—except his mother. 'My poor dear Richard,' she says, when she speaks of him at rare times to his earthly father, and at all times when she prays for him, as she does continually, to his Father which is in Heaven. Dick has all the world against him except his mother and me. I always did like Dick, and always shall; a weakness, which—being a James myself, and out of the reach of any possible sympathy with the young reprobate—is not a little creditable. 'Well,' say I, to the friends of the family, 'since you are always saying, "He was born bad, you see;" and as I know that he had a bad name given to him at the baptismal font, would it not have been flying in the face of Predestination, if he had not "turned out bad" also? Why, of course it would.'

Although people talk about 'It,' and 'That bad business,' it must be confessed that the youth is not often made a castaway for his first fault. His usual course is to commit a long list of misdemeanours, culminating in some offence, which, although serious,

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would not of itself have placed him outside the pale of forgiveness. I have known a young gentleman's character to be irreproachable up to the age of fourteen years, at which epoch he committed an atrocious and unextenuated child-murder; but he was not a favourite of mine either before or after that event, and his Christian name (or what is accustomed to pass for such in Wales, his native country) was Cadwallader. He, however, be pleased to observe, was by no means a Black Sheep—which may, after all, be merely a healthy variety of the species—but one that had an evil disease in him, fatal to all his kind—the Rot; not in the foot, indeed, as in the quadruped's case, but at his heart.

The Black Sheep proper (which, however, is an adjective but rarely applicable to him) is often only black outside; of an external appearance obviously objectionable indeed, but, within, very tolerable mutton.

I have in my time known not a few of these unfortunates, and my kindness towards them has led several (they being confiding creatures, who always wear their hearts upon their sleeves, of which circumstance the daws take great advantage) to reveal to me the history of their lives. Out of which several narratives, I am about to compile the following biography, for the good of my species (as well as for other reasons which need not be here set down); just as the warning beacon-fire, lit upon some wave-fretted promontory on stormy nights, is not made up of a single tree, marked from the first for such a purpose by the cruel axe, but out of many. If, in one single bark, bearing full sail upon those fatal breakers, the careless steersman shall perceive its flame, and seize the flapping helm while there is time, thereby preserving ship and cargo, it will be well indeed: but if, evoked by this tiny danger-signal, one life-boat, that would else have lain securely in harbour, be induced to put out to the driving vessel, and give her aid, ere she become an utter wreck, it will be better still. A little help is often all she needs, although she looks in such a sad plight to us, on land. And for endeavour of this sort, be sure, whether it succeed or not, the rescuer may count securely on one day getting salvage.

CHAPTER I.

A FAMILY GROUP.

Richard Arbour was the fifth child and the third son of parents who considered their quiver sufficiently stocked with that sort of missile before his advent, which, moreover, occurred somewhat unexpectedly. The wind of a not particularly joyful dawn blew free in the silken sail of his infancy, three weeks or so

before that little shallop was expected upon the great ocean of life. The hypocrisy of 'Welcome, Little Stranger,' would not perhaps have been inscribed upon his pincushion, no matter what notice of his arrival might have been vouchsafed beforehand, but, as it was, there were absolutely not enough pins; there was a total insufficiency of flannel; and as for his cradle, it was a something knocked up out of his eldest brother's wheel-barrow (who never forgave that appropriation of his property), and looked, even when it was fitted up, and *en grande tenue*, a great deal more like an Indian 'tikingan' than a Christian bassinette. His mother, poor thing, was glad perhaps to look upon his little mottled carcass; but nobody who had met his papa at 2 A.M. on that gusty December morning at the doctor's door, with his silk umbrella blown inside out, and one shoe and one slipper on, would have dreamed of congratulating him.

How differently does Paterfamilias treat the first and fifth of these post-nuptial incidents! In the former case, 'our medical man,' not yet become 'our family doctor,' is warned to keep himself from distant journeys, in anticipation of the important event; while that awful woman with the bundle—for we never yet saw one of her class with box or bag—is welcomed into the house, like the monster horse into Troy, bringing subjugation and desolation with her for weeks and weeks before it is absolutely necessary. Then the husband—not yet Head of the Family—banished once more into Bachelordom and a turn-up bedstead, starts up o' nights with night-cap behind ear, and thinks he is wanted to fetch Dr Neversleep a score of times before the real occasion, which commonly takes place when he is out of the way; spending an hour, perhaps, with some friend of his youth, and a cigar—an accident which afflicts the new-made father with the acutest pangs of conscience. But when such an affair has happened four times already, Paterfamilias takes it quieter a good deal; doesn't see any particular cause for hurry; declines to devote his mansion to Lucina until the last extremity; and (as we have seen) has eventually not even time to select his shoes of swiftness.

Mr Benjamin Arbour was a tender-hearted husband too, and in his ardent anxiety, scarcely felt the cold at all until he had reached home again, when getting into a damp bed in the attic chamber—for there was no fire for him to sit up by anywhere, except where his presence was forbidden—he became conscious that, as a gentleman subject to spitting of blood from the lungs, he had not been doing an entirely prudent thing. His teeth chattered so when Dr Neversleep came up to tell him the news, that that physician ascribed the phenomenon to marital anxiety, and at once hastened to allay it.

'It's all right, Mr Arbour,' exclaimed he cheerfully; 'it's all right, and it isn't twins.'

'Is it a bub-bub-bub-bub?' inquired the father, as though his teeth were castanets.

'Yes, it's a boy,' replied the doctor, in a tone of commiseration.

'That's just like my luck,' quoth the disgusted parent; 'they cost just twice as much as girls, and I have to teach 'em.'

Mr Benjamin Arbour might have spared himself this last reflection, for he was not fated to become tutor to his fifth offspring at all. The damp attic and the slipped foot together were too much for the poor gentleman, and he was carried off by consumption within a few weeks of the birth of his third boy. Our hero may therefore be said to have commenced his career in this world by committing parricide. That was the view his eldest brother and sister—Adolphus and Maria—always took of it. These were not nice young people. Adolphus had an enormous

mouth, without any lips, sandy hair, sandy whisk—but that is anticipating matters—whity-brown complexion, and green eyes; or, at least, one of them was a good deal more green than hazel. Maria had black hair and a yellow skin, but she had one mind in common with her brother, and therefore it may be easily imagined that they were not very well provided in that respect. We are but too often apt to speak of person's minds as being 'bad,' when the more applicable term by far would be 'incomplete.' Our young friends above alluded to possessed several mental gifts: the talents for getting and for keeping; determination, perseverance, and (in particular) humility to their social superiors; while their prudence was so remarkable, that although the bump of that organ must have been tremendous (if the science of phrenology is worth a moment's attention) on both their heads, they concealed all evidence of the matter from the outward world. Some other virtues, however—not without value in many eyes—were, as it is written in the Modern Athens, quite 'amissing;' especially those connected with the affections, which were in their case confined to that powerful passion which some philosophers assert to be the motive cause of all good works—namely, Self-love. It may, we are aware, be urged, that these matters should be artistically made to disclose themselves during the course of this history, but we think that in so doing we should treat our public very scurvily; for would it be right to suffer these two persons, throughout perhaps a couple of volumes and a half, to impose upon *them*, just as they tricked the world, until the very last, in actual life? No. No Reader, however Gentle, would endure, after so many weeks of prostrate adoration of these idols, to be informed that their feet were, after all, but of the commonest clay, and (by a too obvious corollary) that he himself had been but a benighted worshipper.

Johnnie Arbour, the second boy, with his apple-cheeks and beady eyes, was a good-natured lad enough—so long as you did not vex him. He would never covet or desire another boy's toys, nor permit another boy to get beyond coveting his. Having considerable independence of character, and not being desirous of a playmate—brother Dolly, perhaps, having given him an unfavourable opinion of that sort of article—he had not been anxious for the new arrival; but since he *had* made his appearance, he was prepared to put up with him, as with the multiplication table, stale bread on Monday mornings, the transitory nature of lollipops, or any other necessary evil.

But Margaret, 'rare pale Margaret,' our Maggie, everybody's Maggie [Ah, how Dick's manner used to change when he spoke to us of her and of his mother! No angry scorn about him then, and with the voice that had grown hoarse with paying back scorn for scorn to half the world, become as soft and gentle as a woman's!—Maggie, we say, hailed 'little buddy's' advent with rapture, holding it highest treat to stand afar off and see him in his tub—poor papa's foot-bath—or to be suffered to delicately dint his cheek with her tiny finger. Maggie was frail as a lily, and almost as white; but if any mortal creature, from King Herod to a sausage-maker, had threatened to harm that baby, she would have drawn bodkin, and done battle with her life.

As for our hero's mother, we are introduced to the sweet lady at an evil time, when the gentle eyes are red with weeping, and the delicate frame is tried with watching; but she is fair, as Maggie's mother should be, even yet. Her only earthly consolation, now that the dark shadow of death has crossed the threshold, and points towards the lover of her youth—the sharer of life's hopes and fears, so long, that all existence that has been passed by her away from him seems but as a dream—is her new-born infant. As he lies, after the manner of the luxurious ancients, upon his ivory couch, and takes his meals recliningly, he little

knows what eyes of holiest love are feeding on him in their turn.

O well-defended babe, that hast by night and day a sentinel not all the treasures of the world could bribe to do thee wrong, and whose Angel stands before the very throne of heaven, sleep on while yet secure, with thy small hand curled like a rose-leaf beneath thy mother's breast!

CHAPTER II.

FATHERLESS.

It has been suggested to us that while mentioning some characteristics of the Arbour family, we have yet been guilty of a very serious omission. For all that has been told at present, they may have belonged to one of the vulgarst classes of society, and consequently have been altogether beneath human—that is to say, properly constituted human—interest. Let us hasten, therefore, to set this matter in its proper light while there is yet time. At the risk, and indeed the certainty, of cutting off electrical relations with a considerable number of readers, whose sensibilities we have no desire to shock, and whose well-cultivated hair we would on no account cause to stand on end by bringing them face to face with persons of 'small means'—at the risk, we repeat, of diminishing our audience by emptying the Dress-circle and the Stalls at the very outset, we confess, once for all, that the Arbours were not and never had been 'carriage-people.' But, on the other hand, ladies and gentlemen of the Pit and Galleries, neither were they merely 'genteel' or 'respectable.' The Arbours were a round or two in the social ladder above *you*, O middle classes! and therefore, as we conclude, not by any means unworthy of *your* interest and sympathy.

Mr Benjamin Arbour, now struggling hopelessly with consumption, was in the receipt of five hundred a year or so; but that income was, alas! so peculiarly his own that it ceased with his life. He filled also a perhaps responsible and certainly mysterious office committed to him by the government of his native country. He was an Authorised Commissioner for witnessing the Deeds of Married Women. Whether the duties of this post are, in reality, so disgracefully inquisitorial as its name would imply, we do not know, but we may be certain that Mr Arbour had his consort's full permission to discharge them. He had had probably about as few secrets intrusted to him throughout his life as anybody—for men composed one-half of quicksilver, and the other half of the milk of human kindness, are known to be but indifferent repositories for such things—and he had certainly never had a single secret from his wife. They had been married nearly fifteen years, and nevertheless could scarcely be termed middle-aged people. It would be no exaggeration to say that until now, when he found himself dying, he had never once seriously regretted the having wedded Letitia Banks. The imprudent Boy and Girl, as they had been called, had been very happy together for those three lustums, in spite of all good-natured prophecies to the contrary.

Ingram Arbour, the merchant-elder and only brother to Benjamin—had even predicted their final settlement in the workhouse of their native district in Devonshire, and he was a man who had a reputation for judgment too. He also had been left a life-interest in a sum of money which secured him five hundred a year, and perhaps possessed it still—unless it had been advantageously disposed of—but that was a mere nothing in comparison with his present possessions. He had not found himself hampered with a wife and family in the second holidays after he had left school. He had not bought a cottage—the one redeeming circumstance connected with which in *his* eyes, was, that it was on the bank of a river, which might perhaps afford accidental provision for surplus children—nor buried

himself in the country, like a talent laid up in a napkin, accumulating nothing but small-change. It was the contemplation of that small-change that chiefly troubled poor Benjamin now, and made him almost wish that he had remained a bachelor. He had faith in a good Providence, and did not doubt that a Raven of some sort would be sent to feed those hungry mouths; but he would certainly have preferred to have felt himself more deeply connected with the Eagle. That was the name of the Assurance Office from which one thousand pounds would be due to the family after his death, besides which there were two thousand pounds of Leety's own, and that was all.

'I wish, dearest,' gasped he, as she was smoothing his pillow upon the very last day that she ever had that loving office to perform for him—'I do so wish that it was more.' He spoke so low that even the ear of love failed to catch his meaning; but Leety heard the word 'wish,' and all her faculties were at once devoted to find out what this desire of the dying man might be.

'Do you wish to see our children, Benjy, dear?'

She had called him by that fond title ever since that walk upon the purple Devon moorland far away and long ago, where they two had plighted their troth. What a miracle of strength and beauty he had then seemed to her, and now this ghastly shadow was all that remained of him, itself about to flit into the darkness of Death! Yet, be sure, he was never so dear to her before. Not if she could have lived her life again, at that moment, would she have spent it otherwise as regarded that departing clay. She would have chosen no other than he though this end had been foreseen from the beginning. Not one of the wretched minutes which yet remained to her to watch that still loving face would she have bartered for centuries of Paradise.

'Do you wish to see our children, Benjy, dear?'

He neither spoke nor stirred, but his eyes, which were yet clear and even brilliant, and that watched her every motion, replied: 'Yes, dearest.'

Adolphus and Maria, Johnnie and Maggie, were marched in therefore—the two latter hand in hand, for they were smitten with vague terror, understanding only that that Something was impending whose coming had kept the house so still for weeks. But the eyes said: 'There is yet another, Leety,' and No. 5 was transferred from the nursery to his mother's arms, who for this once, however, regarded him not, nor sealed his infant eyelids with her lips. The two eldest children were tall enough to lean over the bedside and salute for the last time their father's forehead; an operation which they performed in a very rapid and energetic manner, much as a superstitious dealer at whist hastens to tap the trump card as soon as it is turned up, for luck. Johnnie, with his ruddy apple-face turned to the colour of a lemon, climbed up the bed, and said, 'Good-bye, father,' in compliance with his mother's whisper, very dutifully. But little Maggie lay by her father's side in an agony of grief, and covered his grisly chin with tears and kisses.

There was no need for any farewell between those two, who had been acting, saying, thinking nothing but farewells since Dr Neversleep had said in his firm, kind voice: 'I can do nothing further, my good friend, now, but pray for you;' but as Leety stooped down over him to put her baby's cheek to his mouth, that he too in after-years might know that his father had kissed him, her husband, reminded by that action perhaps of that which had been oppressing his mind before, murmured once again: 'I wish, Leety, I do so wish that it was more.'

'What does he mean? What does your father mean?' cried she appealingly, for nothing was more distant from her own thoughts than that which was agitating his.

On this, Maria whispered something to Adolphus,

and straightway that young gentleman observed, in spite of her evident reluctance to have her remark repeated: 'Please, mamma, Maria thinks papa is wishing that he had left us some more money.'

This young lady of ten years old did indeed possess a great sagacity, and even, as we have seen, considerable modesty in the exhibition of it; and yet there was something uncomfortably just in the remark which nurse Rachel subsequently made in the servants' hall, when describing the above scene in her master's death-chamber: 'Twas an odd thing for such a mere child to have been thinking of money, at a time like that, too!'

The above wish was the last idea that Mr Arbour lived to express, and in a few more minutes there was no protector left to poor Leety and her offspring, save Him who makes the Widow and the Fatherless his peculiar care. The bereft devoted woman would not easily have been persuaded, perhaps, to leave that precious clay—would have watched by the casket half the night, though her jewel lay in the place where thieves break not through nor steal—but that a tiny cry arose from No. 5, reminding her that there was a duty and a joy in this world yet.

For a week, there was a silence throughout the cottage by the river, only broken by sad sounds. The clock ticked on the stairs more solemnly, as though it were discoursing upon matters graver than Time; the stairs creaked under muffled footsteps; the servants conversed in muffled tones. Once only a laugh broke forth from the kitchen, arising from some inadvertent domestic, and immediately reproved by a 'For shame, Jane, don't you remember what has happened?' and succeeded by tears; and once a prolonged and hearty howl issued from Master Johnnie, who had been very foolishly forbidden by nurse Rachel to spin his humming-top, in consideration of the domestic calamity which had befallen him.

After that weary week, the early summer sun again shone into that reopened chamber, as full of light and warmth as ever, though it seemed not so to her who lay upon the widowed bed, and the memory of the dead man faded fast away from every heart save one, as the darkness dwindles before the dawn. Another life had begun to fill the place of that which had departed, and to the end that it should do so worthily, they carried it in gorgeous cap and flowing linen, to abjure the pomps and vanities of the world at the baptismal font. In a word, No. 5, who had as yet been only registered, was christened, and was named—as Steele, and Savage, and half the scapegraces of the world had been named before him—Richard, the long for Dick.

CHINESE COMMERCE.

WHEN Napoleon said in his wrath, that the English were a nation of shopkeepers, the epithet which he flung in anger was repelled with scorn. It was reserved for a later generation to recall the words of the Man of Destiny, to discover involuntary praise in the apparent taunt, and proudly to fit upon Britannia's head what the original constructor meant for anything but a Cap of Dignity. And right is the modern reading of the phrase; better is it to produce than to ravage and burn; better to be a nation of shopkeepers than of idle beggars, of moonstruck dreamers, or of brigand soldiery. Britannia has surely chosen wisely and well. But if the original reproach had been thrown in the teeth of John Chinaman instead of John Bull, even by bitterest foe, and in the heat of the sternest struggle, the expression would have been smirkingly accepted as praise, pure, unalloyed praise. It never enters the head of a Chinese to despise traffic in any form. Whatever turns a penny is worthy of honourable mention, according to the

ethics of the Flowery Land. True, the farmer ranks before the shopkeeper, before the manufacturer, before the mighty merchant, piling a city's wealth in his *hong*, before even the bebuttoned mandarin, for did not Confucius declare that agriculture was the basis of society, and do not all Chinese laws class the cultivator highest in the scale of orders? Yet it is better to be a merchant in China than anything else. If the Sacred Books are less eloquent in the trader's praise than in that of the agriculturist, the property of the former is safer from rebel, and locust, and greedy prefect, than the garnered of the other or his teeming fields. If the emperor pays Ceres the annual attention of laying his own hand on the stilts of the royal plough, and tracing the first furrow in the fat black plain of Pe-tche-li, the poor farmer is not much the better for this ceremony; the Taipings and the Imperialists make bare the land they march over, and whoever prevails, his crops must nourish the victor.

It is only of late that we Outer Barbarians have begun to get a glimpse of the extraordinary vitality of Chinese commerce, of the wonderful stir, and hum, and bustle of that enormous human hive, on whose extreme confines we have been stationed for centuries as tenants-at-will. Under the old régime, when we dwelt in Canton alone, and there on sufferance, our most practical men had but a dim idea how colossal was the trade of the huge empire. In spite of the vast amount of our imports from China—in spite of our fleets of tea-laden merchantmen, of our consignments of raw and manufactured silks—it gradually became manifest that we were mere gleaners of the great golden harvest, mere outsiders and nibblers at the gorgeous prize. China can better spare us than we China. Our tea-pots depend upon the good pleasure of the Flowery Land, while to the Celestials we simply represent so much silver annually. Our cash is all they will take, hitherto, and a one-sided bargain we have been forced to make of it; but it is merely because China regards us as an ungracious and unwelcome customer, insists on ready-money dealings for such articles as we will and must buy, ridicules reciprocity, declines our goods, and turns a cold shoulder to Manchester. Why is this? Have we, then, to do with a people such as may be found in more than one part of the map of Europe, a nation grudging every penny spent beyond its own borders, suspicious, hoarding, and utterly averse to enterprise? This is not a description applicable to the sleek Mongolians of the great double Delta. Although their chief traffic is the home-trade, still they buy and sell with many other foreigners than ourselves, and do business with a hundred rude tribes whose ideas of commerce do not soar beyond the plainest barter, and who have not a single ounce of silver to contribute to the till of John Chinaman. This foreign trade is altogether in Chinese hands; the merchants know the wants of their own countrymen to a nicety, and by long experience are equally well acquainted with the requirements of the semi-savages by whom they are surrounded.

Tartary and Tibet, for instance, require tea as urgently as we *Fanquis* of England and America; they use millions of pounds yearly, all of which must reach the customer by a long and painful land-transport system. Within the Great Wall, men are found to be cheaper than any other beasts of burden. The brick-tea of the province of Hoo-pe is intended for the consumption of the Mongol and Kirghiz hordes; even as the chest-tea is designed to refresh British palates; and the sack-tea, sewn up in leathern bags, well coated with varnish, is destined to gladden the thirsty Russian. But more tea, to the best of our information, leaves China in the form of bricks than in any other way. Boxes could never be carried, unbroken, on the backs of men over rugged and almost trackless mountains, through ravines, thorny brakes, treacherous morasses,

and sullen wastes; boxes could never scale precipices by paths fit only for the hill-goat, cross ridges perilous with ice and walled by snow, struggle through storms and mire, and finally arrive triumphantly at the frontier town, where a new mode of conveyance is ready. No, until our engineers shall tunnel through the savage defiles of the Fey-yue-ling, and European skill construct railways where now the hardy ponies of the Tartars can scarce keep their footing, brick-tea will be the favourite in the markets of Lassa and Samarcand. The tea which is to be the standard beverage and daily comfort of the wandering millions of Central Asia, is chiefly, though not wholly, grown in the province of Hoo-pe. A coarse black leaf is this, when dried, and one warranted to please the taste of Tamerlane's rough-riding countrymen. After drying, the leaves are to be squeezed into shape; and for this purpose, wooden moulds are required, in which the leaves are placed, and violently stamped down by barefooted coolies, besides being smeared with gum, glue, a sort of gruel made of rice stewed to pulp, and even blood, to make the component parts adhere. Then the brick is dried in a small kiln, and tossed aside, hard and perfect; hereafter to be chopped in pieces by Tartar hatchets, flung into a great seething iron caldron, boiled along with huge lumps of butter, by way of a delicate relish, and swallowed in bowls of greasy scalding liquor around the wild bivouac-fires of the steppe. But the brick-tea has far to go before it reaches its consumers. First, the bricks are placed in bamboo-baskets, then the pair of baskets are slung at either end of a balance-pole, and the pole rests on the brown, bare shoulder of a porter, or coolie. A patient race are those coolies, strong, swift, and far from cowardly. They have but one fear on earth, apart from a certain irrational dread of the spirits of the mountains. They fear the mandarin—the dreadful pedant in the official cap, with the little round button surmounting all, like the great Panjandrum himself—the mandarin who deals out pillory and scourge, and has torturers at his beck, and soldiers within call, and tortures law and philosophy for wrenching Sin-sing's thumbs from their sockets, or caging Lang-lung in the hideous cage for many a sleepless night and shameful day.

These poor porters are gay and cheerful enough when out of the shadow of law; they face cold and heat, tempest and wolves, with admirable courage, and approve themselves on their long journeys to be own brothers to those sturdy coolies of the Land Transport Service, who, at the capture of the Forts, leaped into the moat, to act as living props for the ladders on which the French stormers crossed. The pay of a porter is not unduly high, considering his load, which is never less than eighty pounds in weight. By government tariff, he gets a sapeck—worth the fifth of a farthing—for every *li* of road traversed. Three *li* go to a mile English, and from twenty to thirty miles is a day's march, according to route and weather. This is much the same as the caravan-day of Western Asia, but in the Levant the animals of burden have the advantage of four feet.

Brick-tea is not the only article of export to the western borders of the Celestial Empire. China is to the vast countries that form the heart of Asia exactly what England and France are to Russia. She sends them luxuries and fashions, as well as blocks of tea. The silken scarfs of ceremony, without which no polite intercourse can take place in Tibet, and the annual demand for which is reckoned by hundreds of thousands, are all made in China. The white, red, and green paper, so commonly used for writing in all Buddhist countries, come from China too, as does the ink with which every Mongolian writes, and which we call Indian ink. The fans of Tartar ladies; the idols coveted by bonzes far away in the rolling plains of Siberia and Turkistan; the rockets that are to be sent sparkling into the sky at Scythian feasts; the

silken robes that Calmuc dandies are to figure in—all these, and many more such things, have to cross the mountains and deserts as best they can. Gunpowder, too, is a necessary which the rugged drinkers of mare's milk love to buy in the Chinese market; like most Asiatics in regions where the *salis petrum*, the mystic rock of Friar Bacon, abounds, they can make their own powder for common use; but that of China is superior for their long-barrelled matchlocks, which require a strong but slow-burning quality. Cloth and silk and metal, tobacco and opium and pipes, swell the invoice of Cathay's consignments to her hardy neighbours. Porcelain is too fragile a commodity to pass those snow-capped ranges and dreary wilds that form the boundary of the huge Chinese garden. It is as much as the supercargo can do to carry his plump person and flowered robes through such a howling wilderness; but business can convert even a Chinaman into a knight-errant. A merchant among the Celestials, if he be truly a merchant, and not a mere broker and buyer on commission, is the centre of a system. He is much such a Mercator as our dear old Whittington must have been, with his flotilla of junks, his host of clerks, his array of porters and watchmen, and his staff of bustling aides-de-camp. The latter are the commercial travellers of China; they sail in ships, they creep along shallow lagoons in the most primitive of canoes; they bump and swing in palanquins over every road from Mant-chooria to Tonquin. Nor does the Great Wall form the horizon of their world; they boldly mount the camel, and strike off into the endless plains; they winter in the underground huts of Siberian savages; they ride oxen up and down the frozen mountains of hungry Tibet; they make the wasp-waisted Persians stare as they strut in their outlandish garb through the Mushed Bazaar; and they are to be found in Russia, at the Novgorod Fair, offering their wares for sale, and smirking in the face of Christendom.

These peripatetic gentry are of very various origin. Sons and nephews of their employers are some of them, and these, by a not unusual nepotism, get the best berths in the merchant's gift; they sail in lordly barges up and down the Rivers Blue and Yellow, or they drop pleasantly down over the summer sea to the rich Isles of Spice, or fat Siam, or even the Great Cinnamon Island itself. The superior class of junks have cabins superbly fitted up; and the supercargo has all the pleasures of a yachtman's life combined with the profits of his own. But for such young aspirants as are born with a wooden spoon rather than a silver one, Destiny has a tougher task. Corea is their destination, or perhaps bleak Mongolia, or gaunt Tibet, or the Land of Grass. They must pass many a weary year among barbarians, ignorant of Confucian precepts and Chinese politeness; they must endure the long and bitter winters of those high table-lands, live a hard life, brave untold dangers, and bear banishment from all their habits and haunts, to be qualified for promotion. They set off, amid the tears and condolences of relatives and friends, in their little bamboo palanquins, or in their boats, until the palanquin-work begins. There is a great responsibility, and a life of care. Those penniless coolies who carry them and their goods through rain and sunshine, over rough and smooth, can sing and laugh as they go, but Chang must be thoughtful, Chang must sleep with one eye open, that his goods may be safe; he must dispute about toll and custom with this or that Jack-in-office; must call on this governor and that prefect, with gifts on a tray, and compliments daintily painted on blush-coloured paper, and *taoli* talk on his dulcet lips, and suspicion ever whispering at his ear. Chang has to pay the porters and bearers, to keep an eye on his body-servants, to fee and bargain with his boatmen, to watch *ipsoo custodes*, the very watchmen who mount

guard over his treasure in the greedy pilfering towns. Then there are other dangers than wolf and wilderness, than *tourmentes* of snow, and slippery paths, and bottomless quagmires. Chang has to see to all—to learn if there are really banditti on the road, and if the said banditti are mere petty larceny rogues, or brigands of the first water, the desperate *koan-kouen*, or highwaymen, at whose name mandarins tremble. Chang must bespeak a guard of soldiers, if needed; must keep up the courage of those timorous protectors when he has got them; must elicit information from all, separating a crumb of truth from a whole bushel of lies, white, black, and gray. The luckless supercargo has money with him; he must have money, for there are no bankers outside China Proper; and those silver dollars and glistening ingots are a perpetual blister to their keeper, as he struggles on, with his argent fleece, through thorns social and thorns official.

At last he gets to the frontier, and there, on the borders of the Land of Grass, or the Great Desert of Gobi, or the mountain-slopes of Tibet, his future escort meets him. There they are in their sheep-skins, the uncouth shaggy Tartars, with their tall spears, their train of camels, lean horses, and wild accoutrements. There are the fur-clad men of Tibet, in lambs-wool caps and fringed vests, with their active ponies and saddle oxen, those sure-footed yellow-haired yaks that bear man and bale over the gigantic Himalaya glaciers. And among them is a civilised creature, by contrast, at least, a Chinaman born, and a brother-supercargo, who comes forward to offer Chang the salutation of welcome. He is a real Chinaman, is Ching, and in honour of his compatriot has put on a smart blue or green gown, edged with delicate fur, boots of black satin, a decent cap, and a vest of figured satin, with girdle and fan; but yet Chang, fresh from city-life, eyes him as a tame dog would regard a half-reclaimed dingo. He has a rough face and a bronzed skin, has Ching; his beard and eyebrows are shaggy and Tartar-like; his nails are short and unpolished: the whole man has a fierce, roving, ogreish look, caught from nomadic comrades. Chang has but a low opinion of his comrade Ching. But it is his turn now to jump upon a pony and ride off into the boundless pastures, and sleep under the tent, and live with rude truth-telling robbers, strong of hand and bluff of speech. Ching goes *home*, to be smoothed and polished in Nankin or Kioung-tcheou, to recall forgotten accomplishments, and to cultivate literature and his own fortunes. Chang has eight or ten years of voluntary exile to get through, to learn new ways and languages, to sell in the dearest market, and to make all he can out of the credulous Scythians. His salary is handsome. He will probably marry a 'large-footed' woman, and become quite a domestic character in the camps of the nomades, but he will be careful to leave behind him wife and children when his probation is over, to pronounce his own divorce, and go home a bachelor. There are no real ties for a Celestial out of the Central Land.

The Chinese land-traffic is in most peril from the encroachments of Russia. Every year sees the elastic border of the czar's empire stretch to the south-west, every year beholds a new band of Muscovite explorers hovering on the borders of Khiva and Turkistan, a new steamer on the Aral Sea, the Oxus, or the Jaxartes, and the arms and trade of Russia pushing on into the centre of the once mighty Turan of the Tartars. But still Chang is busy; the cloth and cotton of China are more welcome to the Scythians than the cloth of Leeds and the calico of Manchester; Chang knows what his customers like, has fathomed the depth of their purses, anticipates their whims with respect to trinkets and silk, and makes a fortune out of their flocks and herds in his slow quiet way. Cattle and sheep fetch money in North China; camels are almost the currency of Mongolia and Manchouria; and horses

are constantly imported into China from the steppes. There are a great many horses kept by mandarins and other wealthy persons, as a matter of luxury; the Chinese are sorry grooms and not very liberal masters; the animals die fast, and new droves are continually required. Furs, wool, rhubarb, tallow, butter, are the chief importations from the wild west. Besides this collection of raw material, Tartary sends iron ore, fur-boots, fur-pelisses, feathers, eider-down, and charcoal; Tibet offers sword-blades and leather; some shawls and spices from India, some rare wild animals for Celestial menageries, dried venison and jerked beef. Both countries send a little silver, a metal which China absorbs and retains, never parting with an ounce, save in payment of the Malwa opium, or to make up a war indemnity. The southern trade, carried on as it is by junks, is a profitable barter. China must have amber and ambergris, edible nests, sea-slugs, weed, coral, spices and scented woods, copper and tin, gold, silver, and gems; and she pays for these in manufactured goods, sold at great profit, and produced by the untiring industry of myriads of busy hands. The north trade is for ore and caviare, for sturgeons and wild-fowl, fuel and timber; and tea, woollen fabrics and delicacies from the south, pay for these.

This mighty aggregate of human beings may be pardoned for believing that commerce, like charity, begins at home, and that a third part of Adam's progeny can find plenty of buyers and sellers there. It is the home-trade which absorbs the chief industry of the non-agricultural portion of the community. This is no insignificant traffic, no petty transfer from the right hand to the left. Three hundred and more are the millions who have to be fed, clothed, taught, sheltered, amused, and buried within yellow Cathay. The 'articles of primary necessity,' to quote from a French tariff, are grain, fish, oil, and tea. Man in China is a consumer of farinaceous food, not a mutton-devouring carnivore, as in Central Asia. The north eats millet, and beans, and wheat; the south calls rice its staff of life; and both require fish and pork, oil for the stew-pan and oil for the lamp, arrack and tea. China is probably the only country where cold water—Adam's ale—the oldest and cheapest of beverages, finds no drinkers. Cold draughts are poison, according to Chinese domestic medicine. The poorest cannot dispense with his scalding tea, his boiling rice-wine, his corn-brandy simmering in the cup. Perhaps this universal mania for hot liquors helps to corrode Celestial teeth and to undermine Celestial constitutions; they soon get old, ugly, and toothless. At anyrate, the demand for tea is as constant and certain as the demand for grain itself; and tobacco is nearly in equal request, for in China all are smokers, whether men or women; vast quantities of the Nicotian leaf are grown in every province, though the finest qualities come from Yun-nan, in the south.

The great arteries of commerce in China are those gigantic rivers, the Hoang-ho and the Yang-tze-kiang, which, with their tributary streams, the chains of lagoons to which they afford access, and the grand system of artificial canals, supply an amount of water-carriage unequalled in the world. But all this wonderful organisation has felt the decay inherent in the fatal Manchoo polity. Under the yoke of the Tartar sovereigns, the noble canals of the Song dynasty, and the Imperial highways of the Ming, have been suffered to fall into ruin and disorder. Even the embankments of the Blue and Yellow rivers are seldom kept in efficient repair, and floods like those of Friesland spread ruin and famine over the rice-fields at every period of very heavy rains. The great Imperial Canal itself, that boast of the empire, is choked and shallow in many places, and its traffic only exists on paper, in those respectful memoirs with which the dutiful prefects annually deluge the emperor's chancery. But still, where man's work has decayed, the

huge watery roads, the Blue and Yellow Rivers, pour their waves through fertile lands, and waft a hundred thousand keels from the interior to the ocean. No other country can shew such aqueous Titans as these, to which Rhine and Rhone are but brooks, yellow Ganges a thread, and endless Mississippi a narrow stream with a dangerous channel. But the Blue River, three hundred miles from its mouth, is seven miles across from shore to shore, and deep enough to accommodate an armada. Both rivers have their fleets of junks of every size and class, their squadrons of lorchas, their flotillas of barges, their swarms of canoes and of sampans, and their floating towns as well, where millions dwell amphibiously in arks of strange shape, moving down with the tide, or anchored, like an aquatic village, in some favourite bay. Half the merchandise of the empire finds its way up and down these great rivers, from city to city, from province to province, paying toll and excise as it goes, and affording employment to myriads. Before the sanguinary insurrection of the Taipings scourged the land, the porcelain trade alone required thousands of junks; Nankin had a million of operatives employed in the potteries, and another million of skilful workers toiled at Khiong-tcheou-fou, to fabricate jars and vessels of every pattern, from the famous clays called kaolin and pe-tun-ye, long believed to be peculiar to Saxony, though since discovered in France and Cornwall. But Celestial Virtue and his plundering hordes have held Nankin for more than two years, have ruined its trade, and butchered its people, have wasted Khiong-tcheou, and have made desolate that smaller rival of theirs, Song-tcheou-fou, where the most delicate fabrics of porcelain, silk, paper, and cotton were wrought by the most cunning hands, and the finest taste that China could produce. Every branch of industry, from the coal-pits and petroleum wells of the north, to the vineyards of Yun-nan, has suffered from the civil war; for the Taipings burn and destroy, but produce nothing, and even the industry of careful practical China languishes under the withering blight of this strange army.

Still the buyers and sellers are legion, still the fields beyond the baleful sway of the Taipings are cultivated and productive to an extent which our market-gardens but faintly realise, and with few cattle and awkward tools, the most amazing husbandry contrives to feed a third of humanity. With all the trembling caution, the vigilant suspicion, with which the Manchoo emperors have ever contemplated clubs and combinations among their subjects, the most entire licence has been extended to merchants in carrying out their operations. They form and break partnerships; they establish companies, small and great; they carry on their trade according to their own good pleasure. A Chinese company needs no charter; it conducts gigantic affairs unmolested; it requires no private acts of parliament, and fears no opposition in committee. Nor is insurance unknown to the Celestials; they have firms that will underwrite anything you please, from a rich cargo, or a steamer, to a field of pumpkins. They have their bankers and discounters, even as we have; and if they have no state bank-paper, their chief merchants issue bills, or, to use an Indian term, hoodees, which are payable on demand, and will be cashed at any city of note throughout the empire. Indeed, such a contrivance is rendered needful by the great weight and bulk of Chinese coin. The strings of cash, which form the real money of the Flowery Kingdom, are enormously weighty; those perforated coins, rudely struck in an alloy of copper and lead, and called cash, sapecks, or tchengs, are small in themselves, but for extensive purchases they are as cumbersome as the iron pennies of Sparta.

A very good criterion of the cheapness of a country is the value of its most fractional coinage, and here China bears the bell. A penny English is worth twenty cash, or sapecks; and for legitimate money,

one can hardly go lower than five pieces to the farthing; even the cowrie-shell of India is worth that. A sapeck will buy something: it will buy a porter's labour for the third of a mile; it will purchase a meal of some sort, a fish, or a slice of melon, or a handful or two of rice stewed in oil, or a few succulent stalks of the Chinese sugar-cane, or *Holchus sorghum*. It commands luxuries, a seat in a theatre, let us say, or a brace of whiffs of the opium-pipe, or a pinch of tobacco, or two or three cups of hot tea or corn-brandy. But when you wish to deal with reputable shopkeepers, still more, if you want to chaffer in some of the endless fairs and markets that go on perpetually all over the empire, you require a plurality of sapecks. The merchant must have porters to carry his coin; so must the small-footed lady, as she totters gracefully on her lackered boot-heels into the marts of fashion; so must the yawning dandy, who turns over the poems and treatises in the bookseller's with his eagle claws, curved, and long, and as polished as pumice-stone and unguents can make them. Sapecks are the recognised medium, and though there are higher denominations of the root of evil, such as candareens and pistareens, mace and taels, these only exist in the imagination of mankind. A string of ten cash goes to a candareen, for example, and a thousand to a tael. Now, as our war indemnity amounts to the trifling amount of eight millions of taels, it might be a curious speculation to discover how long it would take to count up the billions of demicentians required of the Brother of the Sun by the barbarians of Frangistan. And of what conceivable use would all that copper alloy be to us, unless to mould into Minié rifle-balls, or sheet the bottoms of steam-frigates! Happily, however, China makes great payments in metal of a more convenient assay. In considerable transactions, mercantile and national, the Celestials resort to silver in bars and ingots; and in silver of perfect purity—Sycee silver, as it used to be called in Canton—the cost of this war will be paid by the loser. Scales are continually required in a Chinese bargain on a great scale; every merchant, pedler, or supercargo has these with him, and the weight of the pure metal is established by a scrutiny worthy of Shylock. To save the inconvenience of cutting bars, some great merchants are accustomed to stamp their seals on both ends of an ingot, which, thus guaranteed in weight, passes from hand to hand like a bank-token. Gold is weighed out too, and sold at so much per ounce, but only during a dearth of silver, which, with copper, is the staple of national currency, while gold is regarded as jewels are esteemed elsewhere, in the light of an ornamental luxury, to be used up in embroidery, gilding, and decoration.

The bankers are not the least important denizens of the Central Land, but they do not confine themselves to legitimate bank business; they are tea-merchants, distillers, silk-factors, cotton-factors, or the lords of many kilns; they lend money on security, but they do not love to talk of their advances, for the great mandarins may be expected to ask for a loan any day, and mandarins are not fond of taking a denial. A good deal of Chinese trade goes on with borrowed capital, but not in proportion to the credit-system of Europe. The high rate of interest required by a Chinese banker—30 per cent.—is an unfailing index to the risk which attends pecuniary loans in a country of civil wars and capricious governments. In the England of the Stuarts, in spite of rebellions, plots, and disquiet, 10 per cent. was the habitual value of money lent on mortgage. Poor John Chinaman pays thrice as much in the second half of the nineteenth century. But he is a thrifty fellow, and seldom becomes bankrupt except from some extraordinary pressure of adverse circumstances. He never gluts a market, or sends goods to an overstocked province. His correspondence is enormous, and he makes himself acquainted, by letters and by

journeys, with the wants and means of every nook of the empire. Then he hastens to load those broad-bottomed junks that you may see crawling up every river and lake, with bamboo-matting sails and gaudy flags, laden gunwale-deep with precious bales, and bound for the dearest market, one may be sure. The Chinaman knows his art and mystery well. He has anticipated the choicest doctrines of political economy. Save him from Taiping and pirate, from mandarin 'squeezes' and servile wars, and he will pay his way, and pursue his course, fat and content as Dr Pangloss himself, with what is to him the very best of all possible worlds.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS v. BELVIDERE HOUSE.

Is there any spectacle at once more touching and more ludicrous than to hear a grown man—and it is always a pretty full-grown one—dilate upon the delights of his old School? He deals, indeed, somewhat in generalities; he does not dwell upon the domestic care expended upon him at Belvidere House, upon the salubrity of its situation, upon the luxuriance of the foliage about its playground, nor on the excellence and plenty of its repasts—all which were set forth with such engaging minuteness in its prospectus. He contents himself with asserting broadly—with a shake of the head and a sigh—that Pogers's (L. C. P.) was a happy place indeed, where he first knew and loved poor Harry Binks, now dead and buried (as though the latter circumstance was peculiarly deplorable), and Harris, and Moore, and a score of others, the like of whom he shall never see again. But observe how very little the School has really to do with these regretful reminiscences. He might just as well bewail the youthful time he passed at the Penitentiary, or the revolving hours now gone for ever which he spent with Harry Binks and the rest of them upon the patent Treadmill. If, however, we look closely into the matter, it will be found that the ancient disciples of Belvidere House, and other classical and commercial establishments of that 'limited' nature, are not so addicted to glorifying their seminaries, but leave that sort of sentiment, in its more exaggerated form at least, to the public-school men. For, as it requires a tolerably sized country (such as Scotland or Switzerland) for the inhabitants to get disagreeably patriotic about it, while those of a little strip like the Republic of San Marino do not venture to go about boasting of their ridiculous territory, so it is left to the old Etonian, the Harrovian, the Rugbeian, and so on, to bewail themselves about their nursing-places, while the private-school man holds his tongue, or puts it in his cheek.

There is no case in which Distance lends so much enchantment to the view as this of school-enthusiasm. We see our own young ones delighted to come home for the holidays, and averse to go back again; we hear them narrate circumstances connected with 'fagging,' 'switchings,' 'impositions,' and getting-up-upon-cold-mornings, which certainly do not make us envious of becoming subject to them again ourselves; we are positively informed upon all hands—and indeed take a singularly inconsistent pride in owning so much—that the present drawbacks and inconveniences of School are yet as nothing compared with those of our own time; and still we go maundering on with tears in our eyes about that blissful institution. Our school *epoch*—the palmy days of trusting friendship, toffy, paper-chases, and the dawn of love—was blithe indeed, but to identify it with School itself is to confuse time with place. We do not believe that one of us out of one hundred liked even Eton itself. The bullying other boys may have had some delights for us, but so had not the being bullied by them: if the being 'in'

at cricket was Paradise, the having constantly to 'fag out' in the sun without an innings, was as certainly the other place; and though picnicking under the umbrageous elms might have been very pleasant, a charm was lacking, inasmuch as we had to kindle the fire and boil the eggs for the benefit of others—the boy-tyrants for whom we 'fagged.' Notwithstanding any convictions upon this point, however, it becomes us public-school men, who would be respected by our old companions, to keep them to ourselves. As they say in the melodramas, 'We must dissemble.' We must not foul our own nests by laying a finger upon a single blemish of that hallowed seminary of which we were once an inmate. But *esprit de corps* of this sort, though admirable in many respects, has also its disadvantages. The blemishes remain; for no old disciple ventures to point out what is amiss; and a stranger who takes upon him the thankless part of reformer, being sure to err in some unimportant matters of detail, is pooh-poohed at once. 'Here's an ignoramus,' exclaim the Champions of Let-alone: 'he affects to understand all about us, and says that our first school-time is at seven o'clock; when ever since the blessed accession of Edward VI. it has been at half-past six!'

All honour, then, be to Sir John Coleridge,* who, public-school man though he be, has ventured to point out—tenderly and apologetically enough—some of the defects of that system. He is himself an Etonian, and feels for Eton almost the affection which a child entertains for his parent; but he is addressing many who have never even seen that beautiful spot.

The situation, the buildings, the park-like playgrounds favour the system. On the banks of the Thames, where, at least to English eyes, the river is of ample magnitude, yet with waters pure as those of the moorland brook, winding round the Home Park, and beneath the towers of Windsor, the College, and its Hall and Library, its Chapel and School, stand—a group of buildings imposing in size, venerable for antiquity, and singularly appropriate in their character to the purposes for which they have been erected. I cannot hope to convey to those who have never seen them a perfect impression of them in this respect; perhaps I may say that this fitness of character depends on their size, ample, yet not so great as to do away with a certain domestic feeling; on their great simplicity, which yet escapes any approach to meanness; on their obvious antiquity, entirely free from decay: all suggests a notion of something beyond a mere school; of rule and order not pedantically stiff; of liberty, yet within the reach of wholesome restraint. . . . The playgrounds skirt the river; and, with ample space for cricket and football, they still have room for venerable trees, solemn avenues, and walks full of studious associations. No stranger of ordinary feeling can see the outside of Eton without a feeling of admiration that has a character of tenderness mixed with it; and when he sees the river thickly studded with skiffs and row-boats—the cricket-grounds with their players, fleet and active, quick-eyed and ready-handed, playing the game with the earnestness of youth and the conduct of manhood, hilarious with a winning score, and not dejected with a losing one—while among the intent spectators around he perceives here and there a master, not amongst the least intent, imposing no check on the boys, but animating their exertions—he may well confess that he is beholding boyhood under its happiest aspect. Well, then, may the old Etonian feel his bosom glow within him.

Ah, well indeed! Let Tom Brownism be rampant as it will, it moves not us one whit. We need no eulogy from any man's pen to swell our muster-roll. At the present writing there are over eight

* *Public School Education.* A Lecture, by the Right Hon. Sir J. T. Coleridge. Murray, Albemarle Street.

hundred youths at this boy-university—many of them of the best blood in England; all of them gentlemen; most of them destined to be rulers of the land and people when they be men. Never, surely, under the harsh name of school, existed such a glorious place.

Ah, happy hills—ah, pleasing shade—
 Ah, fields beloved in vain,
 Where once my careless childhood strayed,
 A stranger yet to pain.
 I feel the gales that from ye blow
 A momentary bliss bestow,
 As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,
 My weary soul they seem to soothe,
 And, redolent of joy and youth,
 To breathe a second spring.

*Floreat Etona.** But the Latin, alas! reminds us of its Latin verses! In the Paston Letters, we find that so early as 1478, the custom of versifying in that dead language was a part of the Eton system. 'As for my coming from Eton,' writes Master William Paston, 'I lack nothing but versifying, which I trust to have with a little continuance;' and then, says Sir John Coleridge, he adds a miserable couplet, boasting, 'and these two verses aforesaid be of my own making.'

But what miserable couplets we made, and what miserable couplets everybody else made, except, perhaps, Coleridge *minor*, as Sir John was then, and some half-dozen others. Unhappily, no argument is possible with these sticklers for *Gradus ad Parnassum*, for they have two ingenious theories, which are both unanswerable. First, they affirm, that by this borrowing of other people's ideas, and the looking out for longs and shorts in that big book, in order to express them in Latin measures, that we have imperceptibly benefited. It is impossible to contradict this. It is pleasant to learn that we have been benefited by anything; and one might have been worse, perhaps, if it had not been for the *Gradus*. Secondly, they assert that in cultivating Latin verses, we have, by some mysterious means, laid the foundations of all learning, and are now fit to educate ourselves. To the professional student this may be a most comforting reflection; but then how very small a proportion of the human race *do* educate themselves, after they have been once emancipated from their tutors!

Then there was the Chapel (the little bell of which used almost continuously to be going), 'enriched with stained glass,' remarks our author, 'and many touching memorials.' To this he attributes an excessive amount of advantage. The good old judge has surely forgotten his wicked school-days. Many an Etonian have we heard ascribe his present disinclination for church to his having had so very much of it while at school. What are saints' days to Eton boys—what they *ought* to be is another question into which there is no need to enter—that they should attend extra and longer services because of them? What a nuisance they seemed to be, when we wanted to be over the pleasant meadows—trespassing—or on the shining river! What an unnatural halo does our author behold shimmering around every youthful head. We were not such very good boys, at least in our time; nor, indeed, very bad boys either, although, as for those chorister-lads, I well remember that it was thought excellent fun to give them nuts, in order that their voices should fail them during the coming performances in the chapel. How a simple fact of this kind—and really not a very distressing one—dissipates those misty illusions which even the wisest men, in their old age, are prone to entertain respecting their own youth! And yet Sir John Coleridge

has not a word to say against 'fagging,' an institution which has effected far more harm—although kept within more moderate bounds at Eton than elsewhere—than can ever be set right by choral singing; nor against the system of public flogging, practised at Eton, and at Eton only, in a manner disgusting and indecent in a very high degree.

Against the present absurdity of electing the masters solely from the body of old Etonians—and not long ago they were chosen out of King's College, Cambridge, only—Sir John is energetic enough; and he is bold in attacking one very crying evil, common to every well-filled public school—the inadequate number of tutors. Every master at Eton is also a tutor, and receives as many boarders as he can accommodate into his own house. 'Each master has his separate class in school, and in this there may be few or none of his own pupils—these last may be scattered among every class in the school; but over his own pupils, as their tutor, he is bound to exercise a peculiar care in every branch of their education.' A popular tutor, therefore, like the old woman who lived in her shoe, has often so many pupils that he does not know what to do with them, and of necessity does little or nothing. The present average proportion at Eton of boys to tutors is more than *forty to one!* Now, what should we say of Rogers (L. C. F.), if he received forty young gentlemen at Belvidere House without keeping a single usher to help him? Almost all the bad cases of cruelty occurring in public schools, and that are made public—and they must be very bad to get that length—are owing to this paucity of masters, this inadequacy of personal superintendence. The system of Monitors—which Eton, however, to her credit, has never adopted—that places excessive power in hands necessarily unfitted to wield it, arises entirely from this lack. Since the constituted authorities are insufficient (and since to get more would be unsatisfactory to those existing, for certain pecuniary reasons which it would be vulgar to speak about), amateur masters—Monitors—are appointed in many public schools, selected from the boys themselves. An increase of tutors is sometimes denied, even upon the ground that the Statutes of the School contemplated no such innovation, but the sticklers for vested interests must indeed be sore put to it before they adopt that line of defence. Sir John's eye must have slyly twinkled when, with relation to this subject, he quotes one of the Eton statutes by which the Head and Lower Masters are bound to teach all who come from any part of England for *nothing at all*: 'gratis, absque pecuniæ aut alterius rei exactione.' And it would be a very pleasant sight to see them at it.

Eleven-twelfths of the present school—that is to say, the whole of the Oppidians—were never contemplated in the founder's scheme at all. Only seventy Eton boys—familiarily termed, in our time, 'Tugs' or 'Tugmuttons,' from the circumstance of that food being placed, with a too great frequency, upon their common table—are 'upon the foundation,' or entitled in any way to share its privileges; and these, to say truth, are held socially in some contempt by the others, who are, of course, the richer, though not necessarily the better-born. Yet observe how these poor young gentlemen win all the educational prizes! The Newcastle scholarship and Medal has existed thirty-two years, to be contended for by the entire school. 'In the first twelve there were ten Oppidian scholars to two Collegers, and six Medallists to six. In the next ten years there were four Oppidian scholars to six, and seven Medallists to five. In the last ten there were three Oppidian scholars to nine, and three Medallists to nine. Considering the immense superiority of numbers of Oppidians to Collegers, and that the former have the advantage of being, if they please, private pupils, which is denied to the latter, this difference of numbers is remarkable; but the gradual decrease of the successful Oppidians, in later

* Our esteemed contributor here seems to be himself slightly overcome with that weakness of school fanaticism which he so sternly reprobates in others.

years reaching almost to their extinction, is a still more significant fact.' Sir John Coleridge cannot understand why this should be, and yet it seems to us quite easy of solution. The Collegers work, and the Oppidans don't work; and for the simplest reason. The former know they have need to do so, being poor men's sons; and the latter know they have no need. As to lads, who are as forty to one to their masters, being *made* to work, it is simple impossibility, nor indeed is it ever attempted; and it must be remembered that at almost all other public schools where Collegers exist at all, a similar disproportion exists between them and the Oppidans as at Eton; while the majority of public schools are composed entirely of Oppidans. The instances of 'bodily frames not yet matured,' which have broken down under the labour of school-work at Eton, must have happened—if they ever did happen—among the Collegers. We are sceptical about even that matter; although there may have been unpleasantness about 'Tug' life, even in the way of hard study, as there most certainly were in the experiences of that 'Long Chamber,' where there were about five fags to sixty-five masters, and which was not a place to identify with the Elysian Fields in any respect. We enjoyed ourselves at Eton very much—though by no means so much as at home during the holidays—but we have no recollection of anything approaching hard work, even at that Latin and Greek which was the only literary *pabulum* in those days set before us. Now, it seems, there are no less than three hours of the *week* devoted to mathematics; or a full half hour per diem!

In a word, whatever may be said about their superiority in other respects, we cannot believe that public schools are the best places for intellectual education. It is scarcely possible, with their small amount of school-hours, their limited supply of masters, and the extent of their actual vacations, that they should compete in this respect with private establishments, where lads work very much harder, and are far more closely looked after. If a boy is to make his own way in the world, and has little beyond his mental faculties to trust to, it certainly seems more reasonable to send him to Belvidere House, if that establishment have a tolerable character, than to an expensive public school. It is true, that lads in such a plight are sometimes sent to Eton and elsewhere to obtain 'a good connection,' with a view of hitching themselves on, that is, to others in a superior station. But, setting aside the cruelty of thus making boys into toadies and toft-hunters before their time, and the 'snobbism' of the whole transaction, such unequal friendships do not stand the wear and tear of life; they rarely last beyond adolescence.

It is unfair to Belvidere House to point to the distinguished names at the universities—although it holds its own, and something more, even there—because the great majority of public-school lads go to college as a matter of course, while with those at private schools it is not so; still less justly can we boast of public-school men being stars of parliament, or leading men in power, since, as boys, they were, by birth and position, already half-way to the greatest social prizes; while the lads more humbly educated, in accordance with their humbler station, have to go double the distance—and the most difficult part of the road is that first half—to obtain them. If they started fair, we have no doubt but that the young gentleman with his head full of Latin verses would lag behind the other (of equal powers), who has received a more general, although not necessarily a superficial education. We have known an Etonian to be a by no means despicable classic, and yet to be quite unable to spell, or to inform you in what the Reformation in England differed from the Revolution.

We are far from intending disrespect either to public schools or classical education. They effect, at Eton at all events, the very things which, considering the

fine material they have got to deal with, it is desirable that they should do. They turn out better cricketers, foot-ball players, and oarsmen than private schools can do. They produce healthier, and higher-spirited young men. Not only in mere behaviour and 'deportment' do they turn boys into gentlemen, but their tone is often so high and manly, that it even supplies the gentlemanly feelings that are sometimes lacking. There is generally neither pertness (except in the case of monitors) nor *mauvaise honte* about public-school men, and they are fitted to mix in any society, with a polite independence, which Belvidere House for the most part fails to impart. These are surely no mean advantages. Let, then, the admirers of public schools be content, even if in addition to ruder health, better manners, and happiness in greater proportion than is found in private seminaries, they fail to impart an education so well fitted for the ordinary walks of life. Each system has its excellences and its faults; each is adapted for its own class of disciples. That would be an evil day for the Upper Ten Thousand of England, on which Eton and her sister-seminaries were abolished; but, on the other hand, science and commerce would languish sadly from the hour when all our middle classes were forced to send their sons to public schools.

LOVE AMONG THE LILIES.

LIKE a prisoned poet inscribing eloquent odes to Liberty, Maria van Oosterwyck, pent in the centre of grim old frowning Delft, strove passionately to fix upon her canvas the glorious flowers and fruits of a far-off country, from which the town's every canal, lock, street, wall, and rampart combined to sunder her. By aid of memory, scrap-sketches made on hurried visits beyond the gates, and cut flowers sickening and dying as she drew them, the pale earnest-looking lady worked on. With quite a lily's whiteness in her face, and fair waving hair, that seemed sprinkled with the gold-dust from the lily's cup, pushed back carelessly, so as not to hinder her, and in sober dark woollen dress, only relieved by the large plaited-muslin ruff collar, Maria bent her lithe fragile figure before her easel; poring over one of those small cabinet paintings whose transparent colour, refined taste, and delicate mechanism, shall make them, years and years after thou art dust, Maria van Oosterwyck, cherished possessions even in the choicest collections. She loved her flowers; she loved her art; for these she was content to spend her life: it was no toil, at least it was a toil free from irksomeness, and full of joy, to be true to such love as this. Over her canvas, the flowers at her side, studying the wondrous variety of their hues, tracing their every exquisite curve, and change, and diversity, till she could almost deem that in their marvellous separate loveliness dwelt an individual soul, Maria could well forget the gloomy surroundings of her studio. It was not a pleasant abode for an artist, and least of all for a flower-artist. That murky shadow on the wall is the reflection flung there by the sun, sinking in a Dutch fog, of the church tower which shelters the remains of William Prince of Orange, murdered close by, on a summer's day in 1584, by Balthazar Gerard the Burgundian; that mist upon the window rises from the narrow stagnant poisonous canal below; that smoke beating away in circling clouds comes from the pottery manufactories—for are we not just midway in the seventeenth century—and must not the great demand for Delft earthenware be met in thorough commercial spirit? True, there are trees edging the canals; but no wonder they have lost all charm for Maria; no wonder she can look upon them with eyes of pity only; they are trimmed, and cut, and clipped into fanciful shapes, in execrable Dutch taste! Heartless mutilation of natural loveliness; one might as well

look for human beauty in a soldier's hospital after a battle.

Through the mist, through the smoke and the shadow, and over the trees, there were eyes searching out the light form of Maria van Oosterwyck in her studio; and these—gay, bright, pleasant-looking eyes enough—were fixed in the head of Wilhelm van Aalst, a painter also, and a denizen of Delft, whose studio is exactly opposite to Maria's, on the other side of the street. He has set up his easel, and has work before him—a clever enough artist, painting still-life subjects dexterously, and in good repute for his dead game, scraps of armour, and gold and silver cups. But not a very sedulous worker; unable to devote himself to his labours, unable to forget—as the genuine student ever does—that there is a world going on outside his studio walls. Half-a-dozen touches, and he looks out of the window, down the street towards the marketplace, or over the way at Maria; then another few touches, and a look in the glass at his own handsome face, and a twirling of his moustache, a pulling at his beard, or a tossing about of his long thick chestnut locks. He makes up his mind at last; and perhaps he hasn't much to operate upon, for that matter. He flings away his pallet and brushes, arrays himself in a handsome velvet doublet, blue with narrow silver edging, dons a hat and feather, buckles on his rapier, and struts from his studio. No more work for to-day. He will pay visits; it is really quite a long time since he has seen his friends—twelve hours or so—he will call on Maria van Oosterwyck, and see how her lilies are getting on, and then he will dine—well, perhaps at the Golden Calf round the corner, and finish the evening there.

Absorbed in her lilies, her thin white hand supported by her mahl-stick, with the smallest, finest brush ever seen, defining hair-lines of light upon the outer rims of the flowers, Maria heard not the knock at her door—heard not the step upon the floor—knew not that any one had entered the room—was lost to all but her art, until a hand was laid gently upon her arm, and a voice murmured, accenting tenderly: 'Incomparable Maria!'

She started up with quite a little scream, paler than ever, and her soft blue eyes open wide with alarm, like flowers beaten by a storm. She was a lovely specimen of the thorough blonde, flaxen even to eyebrows and eyelashes—a very human lily herself, so pure, and delicate, and lovable-looking.

'You frightened me, Wilhelm,' she said, her first surprise a little passed off, and with just the slightest tone of reproval traceable in her voice. She was about to give her hand with the brush in it, but a glance at Wilhelm's gay doublet, and the thought of however so little a streak of cream-white would soil it, stopped her.

'Enthusiast!' Wilhelm went on—'devotee! you have no thought but for this!' and he pointed to the panel on the easel.

'Is it a fault?' she asked.

'No; but it is a reproach to the less devout.'

'To yourself, then? Wilhelm, when will you work? When will you cleave to your easel, and be loath and sick at heart to leave it? So you have quitted work for to-day, and there remain five more good hours of daylight!'

Wilhelm blushed. He was a little crest-fallen at his reception. Had the blue velvet and the silver edging so small effect as this?

'I have nearly finished the picture of the dead falcon and the jewelled goblet.'

Maria shook her head sorrowfully.

'You have not finished as you should finish it, Wilhelm. You may leave off work—you may let it go from your easel—you may barter it for a good price—but you will yet know in your heart that it is not a work such as should bear the name of Van Aalst. Why will you paint only for to-day, for the

present hour, to supply your mere needs, and heed for nothing else? You must wish to live, Wilhelm, to be something in the future, to have your name honoured, and your works cherished. You owe this to yourself. Paint fewer pictures, and work more.'

'I have not your talent, gentle Maria.'

'You have more than my poor talent, Wilhelm, a thousand times. With all my labour, pouring out my life at the foot of my easel, I know I cannot approach the genius you possess, if you would but render it justice.'

'I have not your devotion, Maria.'

'You loved your art once, Wilhelm; you had high, grand thoughts about it once.'

'Boyish dreams.'

'They might have been the facts of your manhood, had you chosen so, good friend.'

It was hard upon him—who had come to create a sensation, to win the admiration of the fair enthusiast—to meet so chilly a welcome, such a lecture upon his shortcomings. Maria herself began to think so at length, and changed the subject.

'Do you like my lilies?'

'They are exquisite, they are inimitable—full of your own grace, and subtlety, and expression. You have nearly completed them.'

'No, there remains much to do. See, these leaves are hardly touched; this bud is mere raw colour.'

There was a pause. He looked from the panel to her. Standing so humbly and gently before a most marvellous effort of painting, how could he help great admiration and love possessing his heart? How could he hinder them from sparkling in his handsome eyes? His one hand rested on his hip, the other toyed gracefully with the silver tassels of his cloak. He was in his most winning attitude. Maria looked up at him innocently, read something of his thoughts in his face, and then turned away, a little frightened, perhaps.

'You remember,' he said, at length, in his most musical voice—'you remember, Maria, my first coming here?—my assumed bearing, my affecting to be a dealer, come to purchase your works, when my real aim was to see you, to become acquainted with you?'

'It was a trick, Wilhelm, a shameful trick; and she moved away from him.'

'It was fair, for I loved you.'

She put her hand to her heart, as though she had been struck there. She could not speak, but she waved her hand, by her gesture imploring him to desist.

'I loved you then, Maria, and from that day I have loved you more and more. If I have neglected my art, as you say, may not love be my excuse? Let that plead for me. Do not judge me too harshly.'

She heard him like one in pain, trembling, and with closed, quivering eyes. He was about to continue; she placed her hand gently upon his.

'Cease, Wilhelm, I entreat of you.'

'You don't love me, Maria?' The question was so musically, plyingly, fervidly breathed, it was almost irresistible. For some moments, Maria could not speak. Her breath came and went so hurriedly, and she trembled so.

'I dare not!—in a low broken whisper.'

'You doubt me?' She bowed her head affirmatively, and to hide her blushes and her tears.

Wilhelm had had little experience in failure. He was puzzled, amazed. Could it be that his love was rejected? He was about to break out into expostulations, into passionate oaths and entreaties; but a look from Maria stopped him.

'You, who are false to art, can I hope that you will be true to me?'

'But I love you.'

'You loved art once, Wilhelm: you neglect it now.'

'But I will never neglect you, dearest. I swear it.'

'False in one, false in all.'

'Maria, this is cruelty.'

'Let it be so, Wilhelm, and let us part. Leave me to my lilies; they can never be to me less good, and pure, and true. I cannot quit them, to give my troth to one who may one day turn from me, his love fallen from him like a withered leaf. If I surrendered them, Wilhelm, for you, and the time should come, as it would, doubt not, when you would cease to love me—when I should be to you a poor frail woman, charmless, lustreless—I could not bear it. Wilhelm, it would be death.'

'But this is a nightmare, darling; it never shall be truth. I love you; I love art; I have never ceased to love art. I will always love you both.'

But Maria only shook her head sadly, murmuring: 'False in one, false in all.'

'But try me. These are not mere words—idle, vain: test them; they will bear it.'

She looked at him earnestly; there seemed honesty in his face and in his speech.

'First, then: You will be true to art.'

'I swear it.'

'You will work honestly; you will be at your easel for six hours a day at least, continuously; painting scrupulously, rendering faithful account of the objects you paint, as they seem to you; not trickily, or to produce rapidly, or to sell quickly. You will shun low company; you will not be seen with Heil, or Brocken, or Vander Noove. You will avoid the Golden Calf; you will cease to make Delft ring with your dissipations. You hear me, Wilhelm?'

'I will do all this, Maria.'

'And for six months—mark that; you will do all this for six months.'

'I may see you the while, may I not?'

'No, Wilhelm; it is better not; it is better not, for both our sakes. At the end of six months, come to me. Tell me you have done all this faithfully; tell me you have been true to yourself—to art—to me. Tell me that you love art truly, and as you love art, love me.'

'And if I do this, you—'

She gave him a little white hand. He pressed it passionately to his lips.

'You are mine, Maria!'

'Six months have yet to pass, Wilhelm.'

He hardly heard her; he was dashing down the stairs mad with joy, and hope, and love. In five minutes, his blue doublet was off, and he was hard at work before his easel.

The poor lily-lady, pressing her hands upon her head, was too shaken and bewildered to resume her pencil immediately. Soon, however, she turned towards her flowers, exclaiming with passion: 'True or false, O my lilies, I cannot love you less. I am still yours, and you will still be mine!'

There was a thick crust of snow upon all the gable-roofs of Delft; the canals were frozen; thick ice blocked up the river. The six months had passed. Maria was still at her easel. There were no lilies to be had now, only those upon her panel, perfected; so close were they to nature, it seemed not possible to carry imitation further. She was employed in painting a folded drapery of stamped puce-coloured velvet, the background of her picture. She seemed paler than ever now, and an air of fatigue and suffering haunted her face; yet she worked on in her old placid, simple, hearty way; the tiny pencils moved to and fro as steadily and perseveringly as ever.

'Six months to-day,' she murmured once, halting but for a moment, only to resume again with a redoubled energy. But a step on the stairs soon set her hand trembling and her heart beating. She was compelled to desist. Wilhelm entered splendidly handsome in green velvet, with a thick studding of small gold buttons, a sweeping white feather in his hat, a glittering sword-belt, and heavy fur-trimming

on his cloak. There was a triumphant flush upon his face as he walked rapidly towards Maria.

'You have come, then, Wilhelm,' she said.

'To claim fulfilment of your promise, dearest.'

She fixed her glance earnestly upon his face, gazing into his eyes, as though to read the truth in them.

'You have fulfilled your promise, Wilhelm; you have been true to art; you have worked sedulously, for six hours a day at least, uninterruptedly without quitting your studio; you have shunned low company and the tavern; you have been true to yourself and to me?'

Wilhelm bowed his glossy head affirmatively before her. He looked very superb indeed. Maria turned away her glance; she was shivering with nervous agitation—not cold, as he thought.

'And I may trust my happiness to your keeping?' she continued, still looking down.

'Dearest Maria, I swear that you shall never repent so doing.'

And he twirled the ends of his ample moustache, and dusted his beard with a broided kerchief, which, tucked in his doublet, had been adding to the curve of his massive chest.

Maria started back from him, and an angry light gleamed in the blue eyes wondrously so soft and gentle. It was like forked lightning breaking out suddenly on a calm summer sky.

'Wilhelm, you would scorn to play with clogged dice; you would beat to the earth any one who said you tricked at cards; you would condescend to dupe no man. Why, then, do you come here to me with a lie upon your lips?—why seek to cheat me? What have I ever done that you should turn against me thus? Is it because I am weak, and a woman, that I am to be treated with falsehoods—won by fraud?'

Wilhelm, amazed, puzzled, embarrassed, looked at her. He put forth his hand imploringly; he sought to speak; she waved back his approaches by an angry gesture. You would not have thought such fury could have possessed her. The lily was whirling in a tempest.

'You know that you have broken every letter of your promise; you know that your every act of late has been a falsehood to me; you know that I dare not confide my happiness in your hands; that you are utterly unworthy such a trust. This is nothing. You have a right to act as you will. To stain your name, your genius, your art, with mire, if you will; it is not for me to call for an account. But to act thus shamefully, and crown that shame by a lie, to me, to me, who, God knows, never would or could have done you wrong—Wilhelm, Wilhelm, it is too much!'

There were tears now upon her cheeks, like rain-drops on a lily.

Wilhelm stood speechless, abashed, and angry. His position was humiliating enough—to cheat, and to be found out too! Yet he tried to pluck up heart; and sturdy lying seemed his safest course—so his weak false mind suggested.

'You wrong me, indeed, indeed.'

'Stop!' she cried, putting her hands to her ears to shut out his words. 'No more; you have lied enough. Look here!' and she pointed to the window-post: there were hundreds of streaks of lily white. 'Each time you have failed in your promise, I have registered the failure here. You have been absent from your studio; you have been idle; you have been gaping at the window, or idling at the door; you have spent days and nights at the Golden Calf. Heil has been with you, and Brocken, and Vander Noove, and—O Wilhelm—others who never should have been!'—and a blush crossed her cheek; it was as a sunset on a lily—'and you have painted worthless pictures. You know it—none better. Oh, in a thousand ways, you have been false; and here, see, here's the record.'

In Wilhelm's culprit face, 'midst all his shame and confusion, yet lingered an interrogative: 'How did

'you know all this?' She read it in his looks, without needing his words.

'My studio is opposite to yours; I can see you from here as well as you can see me from there.'

'Yet your back was always turned?'

She could not help smiling, it was such a wretched, pitiful, school-boy plea.

'*You forgot the mirror!* With that in front of me, I had no need to turn.'

Wilhelm stamped on the ground with rage and disappointment, cursing a thousand times his own stupidity.

'Adieu! Maria van Oosterwyck.'

'Adieu! Wilhelm van Aalst.'

Utterly crushed and mortified, he moved to the door. There he stood for a moment, rallied a little, and with a feeble broken swagger, with an attempt to conjure back something of his old grand manner, whispered softly: 'And there is no hope, Maria?'

'None!' said the lady stoutly. She was deaf to the voice of the charmer, and he went out banging the door, never to return. The poor girl, her trial over, broke down completely; she fell into a chair, weeping copiously.

'Heaven help me! And I so loved that man!'

With a strange curiosity and weakness, she sent her servant on the following morning to make inquiry concerning him. She learned that he had quitted Delft; it was said for ever. Paris was thought to be his destination. Then Maria was on her knees once more before her panel: 'O my lilies! I am yours for ever—only yours. I will love but you.'

And she kept her word, devoting herself to her art, and glorifying it by her devotion. And Europe struggled for possession of her works; not numerous, but all perfect. And Emperor Leopold, and Louis the Magnificent, and England's great monarch, William of Orange—all bought from her easel.

In 1693, she painted her last lily—never having seen again the faithless Wilhelm—never having loved again—still Maria van Oosterwyck.

A POULTRY SHOW.

AVANT, all ye featherless bipeds, to whom poultry is suggestive of spread-eagle, pigeon, of pie, and rabbit, of fricassée; we have nothing for you to eat! Our poultry is not plucked, our pigeons are gay with plumage, and our rabbits wear their skins. They have been undergoing a competitive examination at the Crystal Palace, and have given great satisfaction, which is more than can be said for candidates in general, to their several examiners. Nevertheless, they may be said to have been crammed for their examination, and to be arguments in favour of the universally condemned cramming system. It is true that they were subjected to a course of something more substantial than arithmetic, more nourishing than geography, more fattening than mathematics; but still their progress reflects great credit upon those under whose fostering care they pursued their studies; and very distinguished tutors and governesses some of them appear to have had—Right Honourable Earls, and Most Honourable Marchionesses, and Lady Julias; and plain (and very likely pretty) Mistresses, and Misses, and Honourable Misters; and Esquires by right, and Esquires by courtesy; and Majors, and Captains, and simple Misters. What cock wouldn't crow at the bidding of an earl? What hen wouldn't cackle at the sight of a marchioness? What chicken wouldn't fatten under the glance of Lady Julia? What pigeon wouldn't thrive under the tutelage of a major? What rabbit's ears wouldn't lengthen under the drilling of a captain? We were not surprised, therefore, at the triumphant cock-a-doodle-doo, and the impertinent clucks of the fowls, as we inspected their several pens; we understood perfectly the strut of the pigeons, and the imperturbable self-possession of the rabbits. There

were no fewer than 704 candidates entered, though they did not all come to the scratch—the pupils of not less than 224 ladies and gentlemen. There were five examiners, of whom two were professors of poultry, two professors of pigeonry, and three professors of rabbitry. The competitors were divided into 104 classes, 43 consisting of poultry, 52 of pigeons, and 9 of rabbits. The candidates in the 43d class of poultry, and in all the classes of pigeons and rabbits, were allowed to be of any age—though we thought it a pity to allow any of them to grow to toughness—but in the other 42 classes, they were obliged to be chickens of 1860. Seeing, therefore, the short time which had elapsed since their egg-hood, we could not but be astonished and edified at the immense progress which they had made. We are not aware of the precise age at which chickens are considered *passés*, but there was a very edible appearance about all but the cocks and the ganders.

The first three classes of poultry were what are called Spanish chickens; the next four, Dorking; the four after these, Cochins. Then came two classes of Brahmopootras; after them, five of Game Fowls; three of Gold or Silver Pencilled Hamburgs; three of Gold or Silver Spangled Hamburgs. Classes 25, 26, 27, and 28 were filled by Polish Fowl, whereof the cocks wore mops instead of combs by way of head-dress; 29 consisted of Malays; 30 of other district breeds, as Crèveceur, Black Hamburg, Andalucian, and Cuckoo Cochins; 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35 of spiteful-looking Bantams; 36 and 37 of our relatives the Geese, both White, Gray, and Mottled; 38, 39, and 40 of Ducks and Drakes; 41 of Turkeys or Gobblecocks; and 42 should have consisted of Guinea-fowl, but we didn't observe any, and therefore put them down as 'absent.'

The Fowls underwent at the hands of the professors a severe examination in 'high condition,' 'quality,' 'beauty of plumage,' 'uniformity in the markings,' 'combs,' and 'weight.' The Spanish were declared to be not up to the average of former years: this we attribute to an overweening confidence in their own powers, upon the part especially of the cocks; we particularly noticed one which evidently held the same views with respect to the rising of the sun as Mrs Poyser's famous bird. They must recollect that, without due attention to the regulations which their tutors and governesses have laid down for their guidance, and without a little of the diffidence so suitable to their tender age, they can hardly expect to attain excellence. We recommend to their notice and imitation the dignified demeanour, and proper regard for his feathers, displayed by the White Dorking cock, which, in company with its two kin pullets, won the second prize in Class 6. It is true that this cock had been under the care of a reverend gentleman, and had therefore the advantage of a religious education; but this is by no means indispensable for the proper development of chickenhood. The Cochins were highly complimented by the examiners, as were also the Brahmopootras, and we have no reason to doubt that the honour was deserved. Still we must plead guilty to a strong prejudice against Cochins; their personal appearance is by no means prepossessing, more especially when they are of a cinnamon or buff hue: both in colour and in attitude they then remind us (when they throw up their heads) of a feathered giraffe with his front legs cut off. There always appears to be something the matter with their tails; they are decidedly knock-kneed; the feathers on their drumsticks have no business there, and look as though they were stuck on with mucilage; their cock-a-doodle-doo is hoarse and discordant; the flavour of the hen's eggs is certainly roughish, and the chicken's leg we had for dinner one day was toughish. The commendations bestowed upon the Game Fowls we hereby beg to endorse, and at the same time to express our opinion that, in the

event of disturbances arising between Cochin-China chickens and the Game Fowls of this country, the superior qualities evinced by the latter will achieve for them the mastery. Gold-laced and silver-laced bantams were a novelty to us in point of nomenclature: we had heard of gold-laced and silver-laced coats and waistcoats and hats, but gold-laced and silver-laced birds we had not in our vocabulary: however, we were very glad to see them; they acquitted themselves admirably, and went through their evolutions with remarkable elegance. The same may be said of their white and black, and mixed cousins; and we were not at all surprised to find that the family group in No. 264 was 'highly commended' by the examiners. They also, like the well-behaved Dorking cock to which allusion has already been made, were brought up in a clergyman's household, and consequently observed the strictest propriety. The Polish fowls elicited the loud approbation both of the examiners and the visitors; there was a soberness about their black and silver plumage peculiarly appropriate to exiles; their 'mops' were dishevelled and gray before their time; a touching melancholy was in their glance, and they shook their heads in a mournful way, as though they knew what happened 'when Kosciuszko fell.' The geese were welcomed fraternally, and lauded abundantly. Two Sebastopol geese, who were present, not for competition, but out of curiosity, were very much admired; and it was maintained that, had they chosen to become candidates, they would, on measurement, have turned out greater geese than any of the English present. The size of the Aylesbury ducks was a proof of the attention paid by their trainer to the physical wants of his pupils; and a lady in our neighbourhood, forgetful of stereotyped femininities, declared them to be not 'little ducks,' but 'great ducks.' The solemnity, too, with which they reiterated their 'quack, quack,' was highly edifying, and evinced a philosophical spirit. The Turkeys, moreover, behaved extremely well, and betrayed no signs of temper when subjected to the ordeal of a red handkerchief.

The first two classes of the Pigeons were formed from the families of Pouters and Croppers; the third and fourth, from the indefatigable race of Carriers; the fifth, from the representatives of the Almond Tumblers; the sixth and seventh, from the noted Dragons; the eighth, ninth, and tenth, from the Short-faced Mottles; the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth, from the Short-faced Bald-heads (the fifteenth was 'absent'); the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth, from the Short-faced Beards; the twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and twenty-fifth (with the exception of the twenty-fourth, which had no members present), from the Short-faced Tumblers; the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth, from the Jacobines; the twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first, and thirty-second, from the Owls; the thirty-third, thirty-fourth, and thirty-fifth, from the pensive Nuns; the thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, thirty-eighth, and thirty-ninth, from the Turbits; the fortieth, forty-first, and forty-second, from the expansive Fan-tails; the forty-third, forty-fourth, forty-fifth, and forty-sixth, from the Barbs; the forty-seventh, forty-eighth, and forty-ninth, from the Magpies; the fiftieth, from the Trumpeters; and the fifty-first and fifty-second, from Spanish and Leghorn Runts. We have the authority of the examiners for declaring, that the fifty-first was 'an extraordinary good class,' and the fifty-second 'a very interesting class;' whilst classes three and four were pronounced 'very excellent classes;' and we hope that the commendations of the examiners will encourage the Most Hon. Marchioness and others commended to persevere in promoting the great cause of education amongst the fowls of the air; for, doubtless, a well-educated pigeon is plumper than one whose education has

been neglected. We are sorry that, in the discharge of a public duty, we are reluctantly compelled to announce that it seemed good to the examiners to withhold the third prize from the first class, the single prize from the tenth, from the thirteenth, and from the sixteenth. We hope this public exposure will be a warning to Pouters and Croppers, to the yellow Short-faced Mottles, and to the red Short-faced Bald-heads, and will also excite the ladies and gentlemen whose province it is in this life to exercise their talents in the bringing up of young pigeons, to renewed exertions, remembering the awful responsibility which they incur if, by their fault, a single pigeon be a fraction below prize-weight. Everything which is worth doing, is worth doing well; if, then, the fattening of animals be worth doing (which we by no means assert), by all means fatten them well. Attendance upon the pigeon-examination did not impress us with any very high notions of the intellectual powers of that bird: it is apparently a very amiable and affectionate creature, but, except when undergoing the process of examination in the hands (literally) of the professors, it spent its time in strutting up and down, cooing very softly, and inserting its beak into the beaks of its brethren. It seemed vain of its gorgeous plumage, and we were rather shocked to see Nuns flaunting in red, yellow, and blue. The Carriers had, as they should have, the most work-day appearance, but were as usual disfigured by huge warts upon their noses. The Jacobines looked nice little things (to eat), but a guinea a head is rather expensive, and we didn't observe any under. One young gentleman, a trainer of pigeons, had the conscience to ask L.50 for each of his—this is almost as good as L.1000 for a cock and two pullets—but the price, be it known, is fancy; for the competitors are liable to be sold into slavery or cookery, should any visitor take a liking to them, and the high prices are put on lest a hungry spectator should long for savoury meat.

To proceed to the Rabbits. The first class was a collection of candidates for prizes on the ground of long ears; the second was composed of black and white specimens; the third, of yellow and white; the fourth, of tortoise-shell; the fifth, of blue and white; the sixth, of gray and white; the seventh, of self-colour; the eighth were examined in weight; and the ninth consisted of foreign rabbits—Himalayas, Chinchillas, Angoras, and Chinas. What decided the prize in the last class, we are not able to state; whether climate or distance, or peculiarity of name, or singularity of shape, we did not find out, but we rather suppose that a combination of weight, colour, and length of ear was looked for; at any rate, a Chinchilla won the first prize, and a Himalaya buck and doe were jointly found worthy of the second. As we have said, the first class boasted of the length of their ears; and so long were the ears of those who gained the prizes, that it was a wonder the owners didn't get tripped up by them in their perambulations. The prizes for weight were conferred upon two does, each twelve months old—one being gray in colour, the other white and yellow. Their appetites were considered very praiseworthy, and the good use they had made of their gastric-juices met with much approval. The other classes were placed, not according to meritorious feeding, but according to their natural gifts of colour. A tabby stood no chance here; in black and white, the bucks were triumphant; in yellow and white, a buck was first, and a doe second; in tortoise-shell, the does had it all their own way; in blue and white, a doe and a buck were respectively first and second; in gray and white, a buck stood first, and a doe second; and in self-colour, again, a buck and a doe were respectively first and second. To attempt a description of the happy pride with which the gifted guardians of the successful candidates regarded the objects of their care, is a task beyond our power: we might hope to give some faint

idea of the feelings of a parent whose darling son had won an Indian appointment; of the laborious tutor whose favourite pupil had passed first in the examination for the Staff College; of the mathematical 'coach' whose exertions had been rewarded by seeing a 'pup' Senior Wrangler—but we must leave to the imagination to portray the joy of him who has fattened a rabbit to the fullest extent compatible with a whole skin. For poultry, pigeons, and rabbits, the prizes ranged from L.5 to L.1, and 'silver cups, or other articles of plate of the value of L.6 and L.3, and silver medals of the value of L.2,' might be obtained 'in lieu of money-prizes, when desired.' What a noble reward for taking care of a rabbit! It is very little less than a man gets for preserving life from fire.

Now, it strikes us that we have made use of some terms, especially in the case of the pigeons, which may puzzle a few of our readers as much as they did ourselves, until we took the trouble to ascertain their meaning, and the reason of their application to the various specimens. Pouters, then, are so called from having a sort of pouch below the beak, which they can distend, by filling it with air, at pleasure. Croppers—which have also a pouch like Pouters—owe their name to the size of their crops, which, especially in the Dutch croppers, are unusually large. We regret to state, on high authority, that both Croppers and Pouters are bad parents, and neglect their offspring terribly. The Carriers explain themselves; but we may perhaps be allowed to record, that a good bird of the carrier kind has been known to travel at the rate of more than twenty miles an hour; and to warn all who mean to train carrier-pigeons, to begin with them as soon as they are full-fledged, exercise them gradually, and always feed and water them before starting, lest they wander in search of refreshment, or drop before finishing their journey. The Tumbler's peculiarity it is easy to guess: he turns somersaults in the air, both when ascending from and descending to the ground. The word Almond-tumbler (in German, *Hermelintaube*) appears to be a corruption of ermine-tumbler; the plumage of this pigeon is marked like ermine. Dragons, or, as they are sometimes called, Dragons, are a cross between a horseman-pigeon and a tumbler-pigeon, and are possibly so called because dragons were originally half-infantry half-cavalry. Short-faced Mottles, Short-faced Bald-heads, Short-faced Beards, and Short-faced Tumblers, of course, need no explanation. Jacobines have a range of feathers upon the back-part of the head, forming a sort of hood like the cowl of a Jacobine monk, or monk of the order of St Dominic. Owls, it is supposed, owe their nomenclature to a fancied resemblance discovered in them to the tu-whit—tu-whoo-er. Nuns have a tuft of white feathers rising from the back of the head, and arching over like a hood, whence their name. Whether Turbints derive their title from the shape of their heads, which are top-like, or from their flight, or from some other peculiarity, we regret to confess that we are quite unable to state. Fantails is a word of which every one can see the meaning; but Shakers is also another name given to this style of pigeon, and they are divided into broad-tailed shakers and narrow-tailed shakers. Barbs are (originally) importations from Barbary. The Magpie-pigeon is indebted for its name to the colour and appearance of the wings, which resemble those of a magpie. Trumpeters have been so dubbed from the noise which they utter under certain exhilarating circumstances, particularly in the spring, when the pigeon's 'fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.' The trumpeter, let us observe in passing, wears feathers upon his legs, which give him a gaiterish, churchwardenly appearance. Runts, we imagine, have, or ought to have, their name from the shortness of their legs; runt meaning stunted; and a little old woman being called in Scotland, we believe, a runt. With respect to

rabbits, it will be sufficient to explain that *self-colour* means the *same colour all over*.

And now, we think enough has been said to give a tolerable idea of the candidates for prizes in this competitive examination. So much pleased were we with their conduct, that we begged for them a holiday, in order that they might see the big fountains play, and share our edification at the unwonted sight of a whole regiment of Tipperary Militia Artillery *perfectly sober after dinner*. We are sorry to say that our request was not complied with, and we are the more grieved, as the opportunity is not likely to be repeated. We don't mean that the Tipperary boys will never be sober again, but that the candidates will never have another chance of seeing them.

ERRATA.

A GENTLEMAN of our acquaintance, rushing for the first time into print, was greatly dismayed when he had his proof-sheets sent him, to observe a marginal note in pencil, which he naturally took to be a critical remark upon the sentence opposite to which it had been written. The note was in one word only, and that only in one syllable, but then that syllable was—'Bald.' Our friend was unaware of the ways of printers. He did not know that—the work of 'setting up' a manuscript being divided—each compositor's name is written on the margin of the proof, just where his portion begins. In this case, it happened that the name of one particular compositor was the syllable in question, so that its appearance on our friend's article was perfectly innocent. But he understood the word by way of scornful comment or rebuke, and instantly began to supply an imagined deficiency of epigram. We are aware that the same story is told of Theodore Hook, with the mere difference, that 'Twaddle,' and not 'Bald,' appeared against a passage on the neat turn of which he had especially plumed himself. 'Hang it!' said Hook, 'I don't deny the fellow's right to criticise, but he might have had the decency to wait till I had published.' Our own story, however, has truth to recommend it, although no novelty.

There are equally good stories to be told in connection with proof-sheets, on which are detected by far the greatest number of printers' errors. Mistakes of the press, in these days, are wonderfully few—that is to say, such as escape observation in the printing-office, and are sent forth to puzzle or amuse the general reader. Not only does an author, in most cases, revise carefully his own work, but it is afterwards read for press by a competent person, assisted by a sharp reading-boy, who goes through the 'copy' in a rapid but distinct manner, hammering off syllable after syllable with just as much emphasis on one as on another. Still, it is impossible to prevent blunders occurring now and then. A book was published, not long ago, in which some modern example of public spirit and good citizenship was brought into comparison with the conduct of 'Cato and Brutus.' The words quoted were the last of one of the chapters, and were no doubt intended to produce an excellent finishing effect. But unfortunately this ridiculous blunder passed scrutiny; the two Roman names were printed 'Cats and Brutes.'

The daily newspapers, considering the short time necessarily given to the working of several departments, are marvels of correct typography. It is in the parliamentary debates that errors of the press might be most looked for, and certainly would be most pardonable. But we do not think the proportion is much greater in this than in other parts of the paper. Half, and more than half, the mistakes in the parliamentary columns consist of simple transpositions. This is easily understood. The distribution of labour increases towards the late hours, with the reporting

staff as well as among the compositors, and much piecemeal-work has to be joined together. One of the ordinary precautions taken to prevent mistakes did actually lead once to one which must have been perfectly bewildering to many readers. Each reporter writes at the end of his work the name of the gentleman who is to come after him, thus: 'Brown fols.' And Brown, in turn, writes, at the beginning, his own name and that of his predecessor, coupled thus: 'Brown fols Robinson.' The compositors 'follow copy' with respect to these names, which further serve as a guide in putting the portions of type together in the 'galley.' They should be removed, of course, before the columns are made up for press; but on the occasion of which we are speaking, this removal of the private guide-marks was not effected; and it consequently happened that a not very eloquent harangue was further marred by the intrusion of these two brief and enigmatical lines:

Doolahan fols.
Doolahan fols Trotter.

Many an eye was doubtless attracted to this queer couplet as to a classical quotation; and many must have been the failures to perceive any good reason for embellishing prosiness with sheer absurdity, instead of using the more familiar, but not much more appropriate illustration, of 'Hinc illæ lachrymæ,' or 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.'

A remarkable displacement once happened in a weekly miscellany. A long paragraph became divided down the middle, and one half was pushed up for the space of a line. The half line that was thereby in excess at the top was lifted down to fill up the space left at the bottom. Considerable intellectual exercise was thus imposed on persevering readers, as may be easily seen, if anybody curious to witness it, try an experiment with a paragraph on this page.

Sometimes the mistakes of printers have a grotesque fitness, and the fun is, of course, superior to that which belongs to mere incongruity. The reflection upon a public officer, that he had been 'tired in the balance and found panting,' was very likely as true as if it had been correctly printed, 'tried in the balance and found wanting.' A similar coherence characterises that little change of orthography in the title of Lord Mornington's glee, *Here in Cool Grot*, which, as the composition is a great favourite in convivial assemblies, was appropriately rendered, *Here in Cool Grog*; while the 'internal arrangements' at Chelsea College, at the time of a certain military investigation, might have been with truth—as they were literally—styled, 'infernal arrangements,' although the first reading must be admitted to be the right one.

A case of this sort—unique so far as our experience goes, and, in all probability, no blunder at all, but merely a well-meant attempt on the part of a prosaic compositor to bring a poet's hyperbole within the range of ordinary understanding—occurred in the printing of one of Mr Alexander Smith's poems. A line describing a lover's triumphant state of happiness, runs magnificently thus:

I seemed to walk on thrones.

Substitute 'thorns' for 'thrones,' and enunciate it with the majestic and sonorous dignity which the rhythm and the whole spirit of the verse require, and we think the change will be admitted to be a grand achievement of weakness.

The errata of the law-stationers, and even of shorthand writers in transcribing their own notes, or the notes of others, would, if a title were recorded, suffice to keep the compositors in countenance. We will try to remember a few of many which have passed under our own eyes. The scientific evidence given before select committees of the House of Commons is very productive of such errata. The statement that 'decompositions take place in great rivers, which

resolve the elements, and completely change them,' might have been more precise, but it certainly gained nothing by being altered to the surprising assertion that these fluvial phenomena, instead of 'resolving' the 'elements,' and completely 'changing' them, 'result in eels, and completely eat them.' In another parliamentary inquiry, the nature of which was agricultural, a witness was made to bestow a high encomium upon *Knight's Oil* as a manure. Mr Labouchere was once irreverently and preposterously mentioned as 'Our Butcher;' and, in the same committee, a mistake occurred of which we are able only to recollect the nonsense. The answer of a witness to some common-place question was thus reported: 'Policemen buttoned up; they were terrific.' What the exact question was, or what the reply ought to have been, we cannot now even guess; all we know with absolute certainty is, that neither question nor reply had the remotest bearing upon the terrific aspect of the constabulary.

'Is your father a partner in the Low Moor Works?' was the very harmless question put to a highly respectable witness, on another occasion. The gentleman must have been greatly amused and delighted at reading the question thus, in the report of his evidence: 'Is your father a pauper in the Low Moor Workhouse?'

The Sebastopol Committee, as was but right and proper, produced a very splendid crop of blunders. We offer a particularly fine specimen. It was stated by an officer, in giving an account of the advance of the allies, that 'the troops marched across the Belbec, and drew up in front of the North Forts.' This intelligible statement was turned into the following mass of absurdity: 'The troops marched across the Baltic, and drew up in front of the North Foreland.'

In the committee on Rajah Brooke's Borneo matters, some years ago, 'war-canoes' came frequently into question; and, catching fatuously at the sound, the law-writer, to whom the government reporter was dictating, wrote 'walk and ooze,' over and over and over again!

A RAILWAY LYRIC.

Four hundred miles, Love, lie between,
Four hundred miles 'twixt thee and me,
Of purple mood and mountain green,
Of teeming town and lonely lea;

But since I know these iron lines,
Unbroken, stretch to thy dear home,
My aching spirit less repines;
For, kin to Comfort, there doth come

A pleasant Pain at sight of them,
When, ere, at morn my toils begin,
Or late, at the Day's garment-hem,
I seek the Station and its din.

With patience then I mark the throng,
Who, whither thou dost dwell, do go,
Though ruthless Fate, indicting wrong
Unconsciously, doth chain me so.

'They fly, they will be there anon,
At this or that o' the clock,' I say;
'So soon; and these long lines run on
From me to thee, Love, all the way.'

EMERITUS.

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